

Hi Dave

You have asked for my formal comments on the above scheme. We have been working with the applicants and I believe that there is a potential scheme that would protect the setting of the grade II\*listed Manor Farm. This is similar to the view of our Landscape Architect. However we don't appear to be there yet. The fact that the application is in outline in such a sensitive location gives me no confidence that the scheme can be delivered without causing harm to the heritage asset.

We have had some useful analysis from Historic England which is also used as part of the landscape analysis.

*'The complex has sat outside the boundaries of the Templecombe settlement until the expansion of the village during the 20th century. During this period, the green rural setting was significantly eroded by modern development. The last link held by the property to the rural landscape is the north-west corner of the application site. It provides views down the valley to the surrounding countryside. Although there is a significant hedge along the boundary of the site, this landscape still forms a clear element of the experience and appreciation of the asset, the last vestiges of its rural setting and therefore due to its rarity holds greater value in terms of the contribution it makes to the significance of the asset'.*

I accept that there are existing agricultural buildings on the site, these are big but are not at odds with the rural vernacular architecture.

My main concern is around the setting of the Manor Farm. To be clear this is not just about the intervisibility between the development and the historic asset. It is equally about the views in which the heritage asset and the development can be seen. This was discussed in case the *Steer v SSCLG (2017)*. Whilst it was struck down in the Court of Appeal, it was accepted that important views of the development and the heritage asset represent setting. However the view was not endless. Accordingly the strategic views of the heritage asset were agreed by SSDC, Historic England and the applicant. These have been tested from the north east looking back towards the development and heritage asset. This analysis has led to the removal of the development proposed in the north of the site which I welcome. I am concerned that the buildings in the south of the site extend to far north into the strategic views that are the setting of the listed building. This erodes the final links that the farm has to its rural setting. Being in outline we have no control over the design and mitigation of the harm is not possible. The policy framework is as follows:

The National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' requires us to assess the impact that development will have on a heritage asset.

Paragraph 192 states:

- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 states:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

In particular Paragraph 196 states:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Local Plan Policy EQ3 reflects the NPPF guidance. Heritage assets must be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. In addition Policy EQ2 requires all new development proposals to be designed to achieve a high quality which promotes the District's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the District.

In this case it is considered that the proposed changes will cause 'less than substantial' harm to the heritage asset as described in paragraph 196. This is in the medium range of the spectrum of harm in this category. It is also contrary to paragraph 192 and 193 of NPPF and local plan policies EQ2 and EQ3. This is primarily about the encroachment of the development into the strategic views of Manor Farm and the erosion of its rural character. Approval would only be acceptable if public benefit could be identified to offset the harm to the heritage asset.

Accordingly I formally **Oppose** this application.

Regards

**Tony Garratt**

**Specialist – Development Management (Conservation)**

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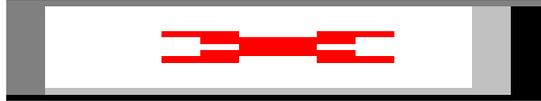
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